
Public Works Committee
Meeting Minutes
8/3/2004 7-9 PM

Minutes approved 9/7/2004
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The main topic was discussion of the South Amherst Common plans and snow plowing of sidewalks.

South Amherst Common Plans

We did not intend to reach any decision or recommendation of the South Amherst Common plans at this meeting, just to familiarize ourselves with the plans as they were proposed. The changes to the Common were extensive, as were the reasons for the changes.

A very brief history of the issue: About a year ago (2003), South Amherst Congregational Church contacted town hall and asked if something could be done about speeding cars and fast traffic. Also, about 2 years ago the Munson Library wanted more parking and got funds for a parking lot behind the library, but the Trustees did not like the idea of interrupting the large grassy area behind the library with paving.

Mr. Mooring presented a plan view of the Common with proposed changes, all with the essential purpose of slowing traffic traveling north and south along South East Street. In brief, the grassy area of the common is not decreased by any visible amount, indeed, the grassy area may be increased slightly. The intersections near the Middle Street / Shays Street / Pomeroy are reconfigured. Southeast Street becomes one way heading North in front of the Munson/South Congregational. Southeast Street is blocked off from Station Road north to its intersection with Middle Street.

The general reason for the extensive changes were that as the DPW examined the solution to one issue, it caused other issues to crop up, which then had to be addressed. For example, just making South East Street one-way (north), caused more traffic at the Shay/Middle/Pomeroy intersection, which then had to be addressed.

The DPW suggested that 10 spaces could fit in front of the Munson on a diagonal. If you can picture the Munson, these would take up most of the grassy space from the street to the stone wall bordering the Munson garden space. The new street plan called for at least 2 raised walkways across the roads, similar but not exactly like the raised walkways on Rt. 9 by Amherst College. The Pomeroy/Middle/Shays/South East intersections would be extensively reworked.

Committee members asked if stop signs would be sufficient without re-directing roads. Mr. Mooring replied that stop signs are not recommended for slowing traffic but for correcting conflicts at intersections, and that a 4-way stop is the next step to a stop light.